3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

A murderer or a lion-killer can also harm a fire by being 'hot'. 783
They have done something fierce and must not eat cooked food 784
without purification. The clue to the solution of a murder case trial during my stay in the country was discovered by a Bemba detective who overheard the statement that on such and such a night, *X* and *Y* did not eat with the other men. 'They were eating their food cold'. In other words they had not yet been purified, and could not come near the common fire and hence could be presumed to be murderers.

It is difficult to exaggerate the strength of these beliefs, or the 372
extent to which they affect daily life. In a village at cooking-time 783
young children are sent here and there to fetch 'new fire' from neighbours who are ritually pure. Women in their periods call their sisters to cook for them. Young married women are seen sitting outside beer parties, and explain 'I have a young baby'. All the medicines have been taken and the protective rites done, but there is always the possibility that an adulterer might touch the fire when he is drunk and the beer might be polluted thereby.

There are other sources of danger. The first intercourse with a 833
girl after her initiation ceremony has been performed is considered 622
to be a perilous act. It is carried out with special ritual precautions and in the case of a chief, it must be undertaken by a special court official, (*kaulu*), who takes the risk on himself. This man must 'eat the chisungu' of the girl before she is taken to the chief. Yet, in spite of this danger, it is this act above all others which initiates the ritual relationship between husband and wife and it is valued on this account, so that a young man can claim damages if his [836] betrothed has been seduced after her initiation ceremony, but before the marriage, for it is said that the chisungu of the girl has been stolen from him in this case.

One of the most fatal acts of all was for a girl to bear a child 848
before she had been initiated or before one of the more abbrevi- 777
ated rites now performed at puberty was carried out. Her child would then be a creature of ill-omen—*wa mputula*—who would bring misfortune on any village in which it lived. The child would be a portent of evil. It would stop rain falling. It would make the granaries empty quickly. It might bring dissension. The father and mother of such a child should therefore be driven out

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909)1910 FT7 Yao
Bemba FQ5

rattle who ran in front of it, and by whom the *Singas* made appearance of being
881 baffled. The performance was witnessed by a circle of women and a few men. When the moon gave evidence of rising the figures disappeared.

The following morning the girl was again brought to the *bwalo* about 11 a.m.
302 and seated on a mat between her "friend" and her mother, while the women
881 danced to the time of seven drums. Her head was anointed with water and shaved, the process was started by a woman and then finished by a man, apparently the village barber; the left side of the head was shaved first. The mother was shaved by a woman at the same time.

While this was going on, presents were being made—maize, beads, a chicken,
[431] tobacco, bracelets, etc. When the shaving was finished several women came and spoke to the girl, after which she was taken away for the bathing in the lake close at hand, returning about 1 p.m. in new blue calico from waist to knees with white sash, the body well oiled all over, to the time of one small drum played by an old man; then, supported on either side by two "friends," she waited a few moments
981 while several women did a few shuffling steps, she then advanced alone and did a
[535] few steps. She then made a present of a chicken and tobacco to the drummer, and then to her father, kneeling to each. Again she danced alone, running to and fro

[532]

FIG. 2.

and spinning round quickly. During this time two masks, the *Sanchuna* and *Nkolola* (Fig. 2), appeared and mixed with crowd, danced about and made funny remarks; they went up to the girl and performed a kind of *danse-du-ventre*.

After thus dancing in the village she goes round to the houses of all her relatives, beginning at her father's house, and repeats the dance together with addition of a little *danse-du-ventre*, the masks (*Sanchuna* and *Nkolola*) go round with her, her immediate attendant being always her "friend." This night and the next day she spends in the house with her friend, the evening of the next day she goes to a
[836] separate house arranged for, and has to have coitus with a man who is asked to oblige; on emission taking place he has to withdraw in time, and the semen is collected on a cloth which has to be seen by the women. The following night she
[584] goes to the house of her betrothed to live with him; she has probably been betrothed since she was an infant.

About the *Sanchuna* and *Nkolola* I could learn nothing. These men wore
[532] masks with calico covering the back of the head and neck, a kilt made of stripe of leopard skin and grass bound round their arms and legs.